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SIPDIS

EUR FOR JUDITH GARBER, EUR/CE FOR CLAIRE PIERANGELO

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [GG](#) [PL](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL LIEBERMAN URGES UNITED SUPPORT FOR GEORGIA

Classified By: Ambassador Victor Ashe. Reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Codel Lieberman met separately August 21 with Polish FM Sikorski and PM Tusk to express solidarity over events in Georgia. FM Sikorski said Western Europeans were starting to understand the nature of the Russian threat, although he warned of Russian "purchases" of leading European politicians. He called for moving NATO infrastructure eastward to solidify Article V guarantees, and said Poland would come to Ukraine's aid if Russia attacked. The Foreign Minister sought assurances of bi-partisan U.S. support for MD, and promised swift ratification if the U.S. Democratic Party sends a positive signal. He urged a "surge" for Afghanistan, and outlined plans for more EU involvement in Afghan PRTs. PM Tusk said that although he was confident of Polish ratification of the MD Agreement, he was less sure of the Czech Republic. He called for full implementation of the just-signed, bilateral Declaration on Strategic Cooperation. Tusk also emphasized the political difficulties of supporting U.S. global policies as long as Poland does not benefit from the visa waiver program. The Prime Minister was concerned that NATO was becoming a loose-knit political club, and urged measures to make it a stronger military alliance. Tusk concluded that Russia would continue to be an unreliable partner into the future. END SUMMARY.

FM SIKORSKI CALLS FOR "SURGE" IN AFGHANISTAN

¶2. (C) Senator Lieberman expressed his condolences to Foreign Minister Sikorski on behalf of the three Polish soldiers killed by a mine in Afghanistan August 20. Sikorski said ISAF forces need better patrol vehicles than Humvees. In general, Sikorski said, the problem in Afghanistan is not the number of NATO troops, but the caveats of many contributing nations. There should be a push to remove caveats at the next NATO summit, and perhaps even U.S.-German parliamentary discussions on the subject. The U.S. initiative to build up the Afghan National Army is appropriate, but heavy police or gendarmerie are a greater priority. Sikorski asked whether progress in Iraq might provide an opportunity for a similar U.S. civil-military "surge" in Afghanistan. Poland wants the EU to present the incoming U.S. President with five EU-led PRT's, which would allocate military and civilian assignments as appropriate among participating countries. The EU has ample development funding which could go to these PRT's. Senator Lieberman agreed that a surge on the Rule-of-Law and economic fronts would help end Afghanistan's status as a "narco-state," and called for a "Plan Colombia"-style effort. Senator Graham said that based on contacts with German parliamentarians, removing German caveats appears a political impossibility at this time.

REQUESTING BIPARTISAN U.S. SUPPORT FOR MISSILE DEFENSE

¶3. (C) Sikorski said perceived links between the Georgia crisis and the BMDA signed August 20 in Warsaw posed both risks and benefits. The Russians could claim the timing

showed MD is aimed against them, but the Poles are glad to show that the U.S. and Poland are not cowed by the brutality of the Russian campaign. The GOP had risked Russia's wrath -- and braved major domestic political infighting -- to conclude the BMDA, and would lose face if the incoming U.S. administration backed away from the agreement. There was no decision about ratification timing, but the FM said he could promise swift ratification if the U.S. Democratic Party provides an early sign of support. Senator Lieberman said that Polish determination to move quickly on ratification would remove a key argument used by opponents of MD funding: namely, that Poland is not certain about MD. He undertook to seek early Democratic support for MD in upcoming Congressional authorizations. Senator Graham said MD funding would be a sign that the U.S. will stand up to Russian aggression in places like Georgia, and should be complemented by major U.S. funding for Georgian economic and military reconstruction.

GEORGIA, AND NATO PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT CHALLENGE

14. (C) Sikorski said it was fortunate the August 19 North Atlantic Council did not discuss Georgia's request for a Membership Action Plan (MAP), since some European skeptics feel vindicated by Saakashvili's miscalculations during the conflict with Russia. NATO was unable to do anything to stop the Russian advance in Georgia, but must be prepared the next time. Western Europeans are "starting to understand" the Russian threat, but much needs to be done in order to preserve NATO's character as a fighting organization rather than a political club. If we are to admit Ukraine and Georgia, then we will need to station equipment and

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infrastructure there, to make good on Article V guarantees. NATO infrastructure is largely based in Germany, but Germany faces no threat; the infrastructure should be moved eastward.

Sikorski praised ex-Secretary Rumsfeld's "centers of excellence" initiatives, and suggested locating say, a center for special forces in Poland. NATO needed to launch vigorous training exercises, and to "get real" in its contingency planning and intelligence assessments, which too often downplayed the Russian threat. When asked, Sikorski said he would support U.S. provision of anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons to Georgia, noting that Poland was glad it had provided MANPADS to Georgia over vociferous State Department objections.

STEPS TO COUNTER RUSSIAN BRIBES AND ENERGY PRESSURE

15. (C) Too often in the last century, Sikorski said, the West did not believe tyrants would do what they said they would do. Sikorski said he believes Putin's statements that Russia will use energy as a weapon; that Russia will protect its citizens and pipelines in other countries; and that he considers Ukraine a "cobble-together country" with six million Russians. If Russia attacks Ukraine, it will create a European crisis, because Poland will come to Ukraine's aide -- the Poles "cannot and will not let Ukraine go down." The West should develop the liquefied natural gas market, which does not depend on pipelines. In addition, NATO should create a Trans-Atlantic Energy Alliance to regulate Russian investment in Western energy firms and demand reciprocal access to the Russian energy sector. The Russians are spending hundreds of millions of dollars "purchasing" European politicians. A former Ukrainian prime minister is being prosecuted abroad for corruption, and the West should disclose what we know about other corrupt officials in Ukraine, particularly those paid by Moscow. (EMBASSY COMMENT: This appears to be a thinly veiled reference to Prime Minister Timoshenko. In addition to earlier questions about her financial probity, there have lately been rumors in the Polish press that she received an enormous payment for her silence on the Russian invasion of Georgia. END COMMENT.) The Senators agreed that the USG should seek to warn U.S. financial institutions about doing business with

illicit Russian companies.

CODEL CONSULTS WITH PM TUSK ABOUT RESPONSE TO GEORGIA

¶16. (C) During the Codel's meeting with the Prime Minister, Senator Lieberman outlined steps to express solidarity with Georgia against Russian aggression. He said the first response should be to support Georgia with humanitarian aid and economic assistance to rebuild infrastructure. The U.S. and Allies should provide Georgia with anti-tank and anti-aircraft self defense capability as deterrents against future Russian actions. Lieberman said it was important to hold Russia accountable, by denying membership in the WTO and by at least temporarily reducing the G-8 into a G-7. He would urge President Bush to withdraw the 1-2-3 civilian nuclear agreement, which had been submitted to Congress for ratification. Senator Graham added that with Russian actions, the MD issue was fully joined, and that he and Senator Lieberman would push for a resolution in Congress expressing support for the just signed MD Agreement.

TUSK CONFIDENT OF POLISH MD RATIFICATION, LESS CONFIDENT OF CZECH REPUBLIC

¶17. (C) The Georgia crisis had had no influence on Polish MD negotiators, PM Tusk said, but a great impact on public opinion, which underwent a "radical" change in recent days. Because his government had been so deliberate in negotiations, he could "one hundred percent" guarantee its ratification in parliament, and foresaw only minor difficulties with local officials at the proposed interceptor site. He had talked with the Czech PM, and if the vote were taken now in that country, it would be close. Poland and the U.S. share a perception of strategic challenges that the Czech Republic perhaps does not. Tusk was unsure how the U.S. could influence the Czechs, when even the Prime Minister and President from the same ruling party were divided on issues such as Saakashvili's role in the Georgia crisis. The Czech history of pacifism had to be taken into account. The U.S. and Poland should proceed first with their own ratifications, and then the Czech Republic would not feel coerced.

PRIORITIES FOR NATO AND THE U.S.-POLAND BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

¶18. (C) PM Tusk said that if MD goes forward, Poland had to make sure that Article V of the NATO treaty would really guarantee Polish security. This is not about money or giving

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something to Poland, but Poland wanted to make sure there would be an immediate NATO response to a crisis on Polish soil, something the Alliance was not currently in a position to provide. NATO is becoming a loosely knit political organization, and needs to develop real contingency plans to move forward in the event of a crisis on Polish soil. He urged full implementation of key elements of the just-signed Declaration on Strategic Cooperation, particularly equipment upgrades and additional training. Senator Graham outlined Pentagon conversations about possibly reducing the size of U.S. bases in Germany, and basing unaccompanied soldiers in Poland. Tusk responded that he was "very" open to this move, but said Poland preferred that soldiers bring their families as well. He assured the Senators that Poland was more hospitable than Germany. At the political level, Tusk asked for U.S. support of Polish Eastern Policy in Ukraine and Belarus.

¶19. (C) A lesser bilateral issue, according to Tusk, was visas. Tusk said he had rejected calls in his own party to tie MD negotiations to the visa issue. But he asked for Poland to be treated like other countries. In his experience Poles were no longer going to the U.S. to work illegally. The problem, Tusk said, was that some Poles question Polish participation in U.S. global politics when it takes so long to get permission to visit the U.S. Senator Lieberman and

Graham both assured the PM of their support for Poland's inclusion in the Visa Waiver Program. They spoke of the U.S. domestic political realities, and said that changes in technology of entry documents, as well as economic changes in Poland would soon solve this problem.

RUSSIA FIVE TO TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE

¶10. (C) When asked about the possibility of the U.S. maintaining a strategic partnership with Russia in the longer term, Tusk replied that like all Poles, he was contaminated by his own experiences. When he first visited Putin in Russia, and met with Lavrov and Putin, he had the feeling that something was simply wrong, which leads him to believe that Russia will remain an unpredictable partner. Just as it was before the Revolution, Russian conduct is often driven by emotion rather than civilizational commitments. Most European observers of Russia were either fascinated or fearful. Few understood the middle ground: to be determined, but not hostile; and to act without aggression but also without fear. Tusk agreed with Senator Graham on the need to send the right signal now. He said that with the wrong signal, the next Russian targets would be the Crimea and the Baltics.

¶11. (U) Codel Lieberman did not have an opportunity to clear this message.

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